



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PO BOX 202501
HELENA MT 59620-2501
www.opi.state.mt.us
(406) 444-3095
(888) 231-9393
(406) 444-0169 (TTY)

Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

TO: School Districts
FROM: State Superintendent Linda McCulloch
RE: Veterans Honorary High School Diploma

I am proud to announce that **Senate Bill 81**, requested by the Office of Public Instruction, passed the 2003 Montana Legislature to provide special recognition in the form of an Honorary High School Diploma to certain veterans.

The State of Montana recognizes the important contributions and sacrifices WWII, the Korean War and Vietnam War veterans made in the defense of our nation in awarding this honor. Upon returning home, many of these veterans were not able to finish high school for a variety of reasons. They led productive lives and built our communities over their lifetime.

As the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I am excited to issue an honorary high school diploma recognizing that what our veterans did not get in the school classroom, they learned in the classroom of life.

Here are some specifics about Montana's Honorary High School Diploma program:

- In Montana, there are approximately:
 - ☐ 16,408 WWII veterans
 - ☐ 11,617 Korean War veterans
 - ☐ 33,617 Vietnam War veterans(Exact figures on how many of these men and women do not have a high school diploma is unknown. National daily death rate of WWII vets is 1000.)
- The veteran can apply or an immediate family member can apply on his/her behalf, if the person is deceased or incapacitated.
- The diploma will be sent directly to the applicant. A copy of the diploma will be sent to the school district to let you know when a veteran applies from your community or school. Schools should only contact the applicant, because a family member may have applied to surprise the veteran.
- The application process is simple and can be found on the OPI web site at:
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/veterans/diploma.html>, or by contacting:

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Attn: Debbie Casey - Veteran's Honorary Diploma
PO Box 202501
Helena MT 59620-2501
406 444-4438

This is a unique opportunity for students to learn and better understand American history. I am encouraging schools to consider ways to involve students and community members to recognize veterans in a graduation ceremony or assembly to receive their honorary diploma. It will give our youth the opportunity to connect with a generation that many know too little about. I look forward to hearing your stories as you celebrate with our Montana veterans.

Full text of Senate Bill 81 is available at: <http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/2003/billhtml/SB0081.htm>.